A

TRVE DISCOVRSE

of ſuch ſtraunge and woonderfull *accidents, as hapned in the houſe of M.* George Lee of North-Aſton, in the countie of Oxford, being in truth and matter of *ſuch eſpeciall waight and conſequence, as* ſildome hath the like bene heard of before.

Which begun the 19. of Nouember 1591. and continued vntill Eaſter euen laſt paſt 1592.

Juſtified by the credit of Gentlemen of worſhip, and others of the Countrey.

¶ Imprinted at London for Edward White, dwelling at the little North doore of S. Paules Churh at the ſigne of the Gunne. 1592.

B M

A true diſcourſe of ſuch ſtrange and marueilous accidents, as happened in the houſe of M. George Lee of North Aſton, in the countie of Oxford: beginning on the 29. of Nouember, being S. Andrewes euen. 1591. and continuing till Eaſter Eauen laſt. 1592. to the great amazement and terror of all the beholders.

MAiſter George Lee of North-Aſton, Son to M. Edward Lee of the ſame parith, perceiuing on the 29. day of Nouember. 1591. diuers Stones of contrarie bignes, ſome weighing a pound, ſome two, ſome three ſome foure, and ſome two and twentie pound, to fall verie ſtraungely, or to bee violently ſtung (as it were) thorow the top or roofe of his Hall, not knowing how, or whence this ſtrange accidents ſhould happen: grewe into no little griefe of minde and amazement. For it it is well knowen to the Honorable and worſhipfull of Oxfordſhire, and others of great credite that haue heard of, and ſéene theſe accidents, hee made diligent ſearch to find the cauſe hereof, and with ladders cau-

sed men to viewe euerie place, both within and without his house, as if some thing had bene amisse in the Tiles or Slates, or whether any other sinister deceit were wrought, to raise matter of marueile, by false illusions: yet all this labour was to no purpose, the falling or flinging of the stones stil continued, the reason thereof vnknowen, as also no man was able to coniecture whence they came, sauing they beheld them fall either throw, or from the roofe of the Hall. And yet there could neuer bee seene anie place, either in the hall, or in anie other place in the flowre or seeling, through which they should be sloung: which caused the Gentleman, his wife, with his father, and the rest of his friends to be greatlie affrighted and terrified with these vnwonted accidents, though (God be thanked) no harme thereby hapned to any one, wherupon he intreated three or foure of his neighbours, to sit and watch with him in his house, to trie if by their circumspect regard and vigilancie, they might gather some further knowledge of these strange euents.

Like friendly and louing neighbours, that found him and his father euer willing to doe them any good they could: The neighbours granted his request: and as they sat with him, he began to discourse the beginning of this strange euent, and how it had continued. Whereat euerie one woondering, and all desirous with the Gentleman to bee resolued heerein: did yet notwithstanding nothing at all, alter their hardy enterprise, whereupon they went vp into a chamber: all the companie excepting one Iohn Yeomans, a woorkman that belonged to M. Lee, who shewing himselfe more bolde then the rest, said to them that came to watch with his Maister: well, watch yee in the Chamber, if yee please, but by the helpe of God, all this

night

night will I abide here in the hal. They being gone, he him into the chimney corner, thinking that to be the surest place: but before he had sitten there the space of three quarters of an hower, he heard a terrible noise of stones that fel as the said Yeomans thought, through the top of the Hall, which presently made him crie out light, light: and when light was brought, they tooke vp eight or nine stones, and carried them away with them, so this was all that happened that night.

Thus still continued the falling of stones, vntil S. Steeuens night in Christmas, which was the 26. of December. When M. George Lee desired his kinseman M. Giles, Vicar of the towne, and diuers other of his neighbours, with their company to helpe him passe away the euening, and hauing sitten by the fire an hower & somewhat more, M. George Lee brought in his hands a paire of Cardes, saying: Colin, and the rest, I pray you go play a litle to beguile the time with all. They being agreed on the game, and for the value for which they would plaie, contended about the dealing. Let vs lift, and let least in sight deale: no said M. Giles, we will haue the first knaue to deale: he had no sooner spoke the word, but a great stone came flying ouerthwart the hall, and hit on the wal ouer his shulder, which greatly amazed both him & the rest of the company. But at length M. Giles said, the first knaue hath dealt here indeede, and with that an other stone was thrown. Is it so? quoth he, nay then maisters, let vs lay away our cards, and fall to praier vpon our knees, which immediatlie they all did, when no more stones were seene that night.

An other night Anne Lee, daughter to Maister Edward Lee, being commaunded by her father to the Farme, for so the house is called where all these acci-

accidents hapned, and with her was appointed one Ioane Mesey a seruaunt maid, that they should lodge there that night: for albeit M. Lee was remooued thence, in respect of these unconiecturable occasions, yet was it his wil that some or other shuld stil remain there, and lie in the house, to be resolued when the falling of the stones should cease. The young maiden, though verie unwilling, yelded to do as she was bidden, and when she, with the seruant maid, drew neere the gate of the house, they might easily heare ỳ stones dash, smite, and ratle against the walles: which so dismazed them, as they durst go on no further, but returning back again, Anne tould her father that she durst not aduenture into the house, she heard the stones flie with such strength and violence. Vpreupon her father bad her call Iohn Yeomans, Iohn Wright, and George Wright, and these three went thither with the maids: when they were come into the little court before the doore, they heard the stones smite against the walles, with such violence, as before they had done, at which noise they were at the first somewhat amazed, yet by reason of the continuance, they grewe somewhat the bolder, yet the cause unknowen, Iohn Yeomans sayd: what Diuel or Sclator haue we here, in the name of God: and at these woordes he unlocked the hall doore, when they no sooner entred the hall, but they beheld the falling of the stones in the former most straunge manner, whereat Iohn Yeomans, more bold then the rest, thus spake: If thou bee a good fellowe doe us no harme, for we come not hither to do thee any. So passing thorow the hal, they went vp the staires into the Gallerie, where they durst not abide long, but went into a midle chamber, when suddenly fell two stones, the one a prettie space after the other: the one lighting

vpon

vpon the postall at the entraunce of the chamber, the other on a Curtaine rod of a bedde that standeth in the chamber, causing it fal to the ground from of the hooks very violently, and in the falit stroke George Wright on the shoulder, but hurt him not.

William Whing and Richard Hickes, commming into the Farme on S. Iohns day in the Christmas holidaies, at their first entrance vsed very good and godly speaches: but hauing bene there a prettie while, and seene nothing, William Whing fell to pleasant iesting tearmes, saying: Iacke, if thou bee a good fellow, fling vs downe a quoit or two, that my companyon and I may go play at the quoits. Presently there fell down a thinne broad stone, in iust forme and proportion of a round quoite, such as commonly men vse to play with all, as they walke in the fieldes or els where. William seeing that, continued his iesting still, saying: nay Iack if thou be a good felow indeed, let vs haue another, that each of vs may haue one, and then immediatly fell an other like the first. Art thou such a good fellow? quoth the said William, then throw downe two more, that we may be prouided alike, or els we cannot make any sport. And then there dropt downe two more, one after another: the one of them had bene plaid withall on the Greene before the house, as was well perceiued by some noted marke on the quoite, and beside it was green round about the edges with playing in the gras. Hauing taken vp al the foure quoites, gramercy Iack said William, for now we may go plaie indeed: but Richard Hicks standing musing all this while, at last fel into his companions vaine of merriment, saying: Iacke, if thou canst do this, questionlesse thou canst do somewhat more, therefore I pray thee fling vs downe some other thing. At which wordes, there fell downe

a great péece of morter, as if it had bin puld from some olde wall, and with such strength it smote against the ground, as that it mouldered all into powder or dust: hereat changing their merrie disposition, they grewe greatly affraid, & vsing better speeches, quoth Richard Hicks: Come William, let vs go hence, I see it is not good to stand iesting and scorning heer. So they departed, and when they came to their fellows, they shewed them the quoites, and discoursed the manner of their falling, and what wordes had passed at the seuerall times.

On the next night, Master Edward Lee went himselfe to lie at the Farme, and took with him two yong men to watch, whose names were William King, and Thomas Churchhil, besides two seruant maids, Ioan Meisey and Mary Alder, when hauing cast a pallet on the flowre, Mary Alder laide her downe to sléepe a little, because she had watched two or thrée nights before together. As she lay slumbering, a clod of clay fell and hit her on the nose, when shee feeling the smart of the blow, cried out that some thing had hit her on the nose. Her Master awaking hereat, smiled at her complaint, and seeing that no further harme was done, being not able to sléepe againe, passed the time away in conference with them that watched. At length thinking it had bene néerer day indeed it was, M. Lee said to the two young men: my good friends, I thanke yée for your great pains, I hope the worst is past for this night, therefore I will no longer trouble yée. So the yong men departed, and hee sent Mary Alder to call Iohn Yeomans, who being a married man, did dwell in a litle house at the neither end of the Towne: when she had done her message, shee durst not returne to the Farme, but went to the Parsonage where the house-

holde

holde remained. Yeomans comming to the Farme, to knowe his Maiſters pleaſure, as hee entred the little Court before the hall doore, hee eſpied a great blacke thing, in the likneſs of a Dog, ſtanding vpright againſt the doore, as if it had liſtened what was doone in the houſe.

Yeomans affrighted with this terrible ſight, hauing demaunded who was there, and hearing no anſwere, gan to be of better courage, and ſaid: what art thou: in the name of God ſpeake, if thou be a man ſpeake, or I will compell thee: when hee could heare no replie, wilt thou not ſpeake? quoth hee, then ſmote hee at it three or four times with his ſtaffe, but knew not whe-

ther he hit it or no: on this he perceiued that it remoued into a litle corner of the Court betweene the doore and the Buttery, and as hee imagined stood vppon a heape of stones which lie there at this present, hee following boldly still striking at it, til at length he saw it goe ouer the Garden wall, and so vanished out of his sight. Then hee called at the window, to vnderstand what his maister would with him: who appointing him to goe downe into the grounds to lacke his shæpe, Yeomans went whither he was commanded, and M. Lee supposing, because it was so nær day, that no further danger was to be feared, gaue himself to his rest: yet was it not past two a clock at the vttermost when Yeomans departed, so that the gentleman found himselfe deceiued both in the one and other. For hauing dismissed his friends that watched as ye heard before, sent his man about his business, and himselfe determining now to sleepe quietly, the maid that remained in the chamber, seeing herselfe alone, and her maister a sleep, making a good fire, thought herselfe now to take a nap likewise: but suddenly a stone fell and hit her on the shoulder, whereat she would not disquiet her maister, but remoued herselfe to another place, where an other stone fell downe and smote her as before it did. Remoouing herselfe againe, she sate downe on a cheste at her maisters beds fæte, and hæing so terrified with the stones falling, she durst not lay her eies together, but suddenly beheld the fire to flame very straungely, and as suddenly also to ware very darke and dim, flashing forth into sundry changes of colour, but euer in the end it would bee meruellous blew or meruellous blacke. Poore maid, biding in her feare so well as shee could, shee still continued silent, and kept her seat, leaning herselfe against the beds fæte, and taking holde

with

with her hands on the clothes. Not long after, ſhe felt the gowne that lay vpon her maiſter to be plucked off, which more & more diſmaying her, not daring to vtter a word, ſhe held it ſo ſtrongly with both her hands as ſhe could: but when ſhe felt it ſlide away faſter and faſter, ſhe ſhriked out, crying: the gowne, the gowne:

wherewith her maſter ſtarting vp, and ſhe hauing recouered the gown on the bed again, he aſked what ſhe ailed: then ſhe told what labor ſhe had indured to kæp the gown on the bed, when he fæling for it, and finding it vpon him, knewe not well what to ſay, but bad her be of good chære, for God was ſtronger then any deuil.

Then she bring him the stones that had fallen, she séemed to heare in the chamber ouer them, a noise like the trampling of a mans fét. Hearke maister, quoth she, doe you not heare some bodie walking aboue, hee listening attentiuely, heard the the noise, and verilie thought it to bee the soting of a man, when stepping out of his bed into the flore, boldly hee thus spake. In the name of God what art thou? I charge thée in the name of our Lorde Iesus Christ, to tell mee what thou art. If thou bee that deceiuing Serpent, I charge thée in the name of the liuing God, to departe this house, for thou hast no power hére, because I know that God is stronger then thou art. Presentlie the noise ceased, and he heard no more of it. When day did breake, the said M. Lee did aske the said maide, if she durst goe vppe into the chamber ouer their heads, where they heard the trampling: & the maid answered, yea, by the helpe of God: why then said M. Lee go thy way vp, and loke well about the chamber, and sée whether thou canst finde any thing there or not: whervpon the maid went vp, and so sone as shee came into the chamber, she found the casement of the window open, and a naked sword thrust throw the window, and hanging by the hilts: which being séene, the maid called her Maister, and asked him whether the casement were not shut in the night before, & hee answered yes. Then she asked him where the sword was laid ouer night, and he answered vppon the bed, it is verie true, said the maid, it was so indeed: for I did both shut the casement, and laid the sword vpon the bed with mine owne hands: but now saith she, the casement is open, & the sword pulled out of the sheath, & thrust through the windowe, and hangeth by the hilts. I charge thee said her Maister, not touch them, but come downe and

giue

giue me my clothes, for I will riſe, the which the maid did accordingly. And ſo ſone as her maiſter was ready, he went vp into the chamber, and found all things to bee true which his maid had tolde. Then M. Lee went down & called another ſeruant maid vnto him, which was by ouer night, & did ſee the caſement ſhut in, and the ſword in the sheath laid vpon the bed: And aſked her of theſe things, who affirmed as before the other had done.

The ſame morning they ſearched other rowmes of the houſe, and they found where two bolſters were taken off the bed in the great parlor, and were throwen in the middeſt of the flore, which the maid Ioane Meaſey ſeing, called her maiſter to beholde. Hee demanded how they came there? I know not (quoth the maid) but I am ſure I laid them vpon the bed, and ſo I left them there yeſter night: and to this agreed the other ſeruant maid, and M. Lee himſelfe did knowe the ſame to be true, for he did marke the laying vp of all things of purpoſe: Well ſaid her maiſter, goe fetch me a peece of chalke, which when ſhe had brought, hee made a circle therewith about the bolſters, in forme and manner as they lay, making it ſo iuſt and euen euerie way as he could, and then bad her lay them vpon the bed againe, which boeing done, they departed out of the rowme, to trie if they ſhould be thrown down againe. Soone after returning into the Parlor, he found the circle of chalke to be wiped out, whereat meruayling, in reſpect nobody was in the houſe but he and the mayde, and neither of them was abſent from eche others company in all this time: wherfore he toke the chalke, and in the ſame place made the circle freſh to be ſeene againe. Then making faſt the dore, the maide and he departed thence againe, and

about

about halfe an howers space they both returned, when they found the chalke to be wyped out againe. Not knowing what to coniecture hereof, once more hee would needs make triall of the same againe, and hauing made the lyers good and great, crossed them ouer from the one end to the other, not for any superstitious obseruation, but only to trie if so many chalkings euery way would be so easily wyped out again altogether, but at their returne, they found al chalking to continue, but hard by the chalking where the one bolster did lodge they found raced a pretty way into a flore of boords which had lien there for the space of thirtie yeares, as it had beene the print or forme of a paw, resembling the paw of a yong Bear: which signe or print continueth there to this day to bee seene: and adioyning to the chalking where the other bolster did lodg, they found as it had beene the print of an Haukes talent, which as yet remaineth to be seene also.

The same maid the very same day, saw a Hare sitting on the threshold of the doore in the little Court yard, and she comming toward it, the Hare sate still, that she came so neer, as she might haue taken her vp: which when she made some offer to do, the Hare suddenly vanished away: When she made report hereof to her master, he could hardly be induced to beleeue it: but in the morning when hee came from the Parsonage to the Farme, he found the forme and prickes of the Hares feete, which made him giue the more credit to her words.

At another time, the Hare came into the Maides sight againe, and she hauing two of her masters Spaniels with her, set them at the Hare: but the Spaniels made more hast from the hare, then to follow her, which made her imagin that it was no natural hare.

Thus indured theſe ſtraunge accidents, with the falling of ſtones from the 29. of November 1591. til the 6. of Januarie following, to the great griefe of the gentleman, his father, and all his louing friends: but then ceaſing a while, they were in good hope to heare therof no more, yet had this ioy but ſlender continuance, for on the fiftenth day of Februarie following, the falling of ſtones began againe, but in more fierce and ſtranger manner then before. And in the Parlor hall there ſtandeth a long Table, on the ende whereof toward the neither part of the Hall, were found diuers droppes of bloud, diſperſed in the compaſſe of halfe a yard or thereabout: the droppes being in diſtance one from another, ſome one inche, ſome two inches, and ſo ſtod in the compaſſe aforſaid, ſo thick as they could ſtand. When theſe droppes of bloud were wiped out, they would preſently riſe againe in moſt wonderfull manner, as proofe was made of them many times, by diuers of good and ſubſtantial credit, beſide, the ſtains of thoſe bloudie droppes I my ſelfe haue ſeene, and to this day they are there to be ſeene ſtill: the table being a verie old one, and hath ſtod there the ſpace of twenty yeares and more.

The report of theſe ſtraunge ſights, being rumored through the Countrey, Sr. Cope being high Sheriffe at this inſtant of Oxford ſhire, came with other Gentlemen to vnderſtand the truth hereof, and hauing examined euerie one in the houſe, as alſo with ladders cauſed the roofe and ſeilings of the houſe to be diligently ſearched, leaſt any hidden treacherie might be wrought: he could not finde or coniecture any other cauſe hereof, but that by Gods ſufferance it happed on ſome further occaſion, beſt knowen to himſelfe, and

in some part to the consciences of other, whereof at this time no question is to be raised: and so the Sheriffe with the Gentlemen departed.

As the fame of these wonders drewe manie beholders, so among other, two lustie youthes came thither, to wit, Maister Thomas Power, Sonne to Maister Power of Wilton, and Maister Peney that had married his Sister, with them came two other. These Gentlemen reposing some trust on their owne vallour and hardinesse, desired that they might lie one night in the Farme, as either distrusting the straunge accidents they had heard, or hoping to bee the meanes of their finall extermination. Maister Lee tolde them, that hee doubted they would bee affrighted if they lodged there, wherat they were halfe offended, that hee should not repute them of greater Spirite, saying: they came thither for that intent, and no where else would they lodge that night but there. The Gentleman consented, and their beddes beeing there prepared: at such time as calleth men to their rest, they were brought to the Farme: But betweene eleuen and twelue of the clocke, what they sawe or heard I cannot tell, but their former hardinesse was nowe conuerted into fearefull trembling, and making what hast they could out of the house: I thinke they neuer looked behinde them till they came to the Parsonage, where they knocked lustelie vntil they were let in, and neuer after would they request to lodge more in the farm, they liked this first nights entertainement so badly.

At sundrie times haue come to the Farme diuerse Gentlemen and Gentlewomen, and haue carried thence with them many of the stones, not knowing

ing anie harme to happen to anie one thereby. Albeit a man of Somerton, within a mile of North Acton, carring one of the stones home with him, had his eies suddenlie smitten with an extreame sorenes, so that through the violence of the anguish, one of his eies was quite extinct: this by himselfe and other was ascribed to the carrying home of the stone, which is not so to bee judged, in that diuers haue of them without the verie least hurt that may bee: and as I haue said before, some of them are here in London to be seene, and neither they that keepe them, nor such as see them, haue sustained anie harme.

One other matter of some account is to bee remembred, concerning Mistresse Lee, who hauing fiue or sixe workemen labouring in her Garden, sent her maid to prepare their breakfast, who wanting her dishes, went into the boulting-house to take if anie were there, as her Mistresse had informed her, the Boulting tub being couered with a blanket, shee beheld it to moue and stirre verie straungely, whereat being affraid, she returned to her Mistresse, demanding if she could tell what was vnder the blanket, for some thing made the tub and it to stirre wonderfully. Hereupon her Mistresse went with her into the boulting-house, and the maide taking of the blanket, an ougllie blacke thing came creeping forth, and falling to the ground, glided alongst the floore to the doore: nor could they (through extremitie of feare) suddenlie remember what this blacke thing was like, but the mistres hauing the better heart, called to God to be their defender, and the maid ranne to call the workemen to see it, but it crept into a corner of the Boulting-house, when Mistresse Lee taking a better viewe of it, saw it was like a great brinded curre Dogge,

with a broade face like an Ape, mightie broade eien, hauing neither eares, feete, nor taile, but glided a-long vpon his bellie.

The corner was ſought whereinto it crept, and euerie place of the Boulting-houſe beſide by the woorkemen, but it could not bee found, onelie ſtrat-thes and races vpon the ground might bee diſcerned, which way it had paſt.

A Gentleman of Warwicke ſhire named Wal-

ter

Lee Wilcockes, came vpon purpose thither to be resolued in these maruailes, when Maister Giles the Vicar going with him to the Farme, shewed him where the Bousters were flung of the bedde, and the circle of chalke so often wiped out. In the litle Parlour, he shewed him likewise the prints of the beares foote, and the Haukes talent verie liuelie to bee discerned.

And as they were comming foorth of the Parlour, a big stone fell from aboue at the Gentlemans heeles, which though it somewhat feared him, yet was hee glad it had so happened, because hee had desired to see a stone fall ere hee went out of the house. Hee tooke vp the stone, and desired hee might carrie it thence with him, which Maister Lee graunted, and Maister Giles writ his name vpon it, that when Maister Wilcockes came home into his Countrey, the credite thereof might bee a greate deale the better beleeued.

Other most straunge and fearefull sights haue beene seene in the said Farmehouse, as sometime such a light, that the whole house was thought to be on a flaming fire: and when search hath presentlye beene made, nothing hath beene found, but such a competent fire in the kitchin chimney, as hardly would roste a ioynt of meat: but howe that fire was there made, no body could tell.

When Maister George Lee was in the house, then fell the stones in most violent sorte, and (as it were) followed him sometime. But in Maie last hee ended his life, and was buried the 22. of the same moneth, since when, nothing at all hath beene heard or seene, but all is in as quiet sort, as heart can require.

To iudge heereon I refraine, committing it onelie to God, who neuer sendeth such examples, but to proue our patience, to exercise our faith, and to expresse his hatred against sinne, and to warne vs to lead our liues in better regard then we do.

FINIS.

LONDON
Printed for Edward *White* dwelling at the little North doore of Saint Paules, at the signe of the Gunne. 1592.